

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1, 11, 14, 16, 17 and 19 have been amended. Claim 21 has been added.

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Yoneno et al., U.S. Pat. No. 5,525,782 in view of Enami, JP 60-174453 or Kikuchi, JP 54-136453. Regarding claim 1, in the Advisory Action, the Examiner stated that Applicant's argument in regards to Kikuchi is persuasive but was not persuasive in regards to Enami. More specifically, the Examiner stated that the Enami teaches that the location of the steam generation portion in the back position of the heating chamber. Applicant respectfully disagrees and contends that Enami does not teach all the limitations of amended claim 1. More specifically, Enami does not teach "a steam generating portion for generating steam in the heating chamber located in the lower back portion of the heating chamber." Referring to the figure in Enami, the figure shows a hot water tank (5) located underneath the food (12). The food (12) sits upon the food holder (11), which is the bottom of the heating chamber (3). Thus, the hot water tank (5) is located under the heating chamber (3) and not inside the heating chamber. Thus, Enami does not teach where the steam generating portion is located in the lower back portion of the heating chamber. Therefore, the combined references do not teach all the limitations of claim 1. In the event, however, that the steam generating portion is in the heating chamber Applicant directs the Examiner's attention to new claim 21 and the argument presented below regarding new claim 21.

In regards to claim 11, Yoneno does not teach all the limitations of claim 11 for which it is cited. More specifically, Yoneno does not teach "a steam delivery means for guiding the generated steam from inside the heating chamber to outside the heating chamber through a steam delivery path and back into the heating chamber." Referring to column 15, line 26 through column 16, line 4 and to Figure 14 of Yoneno, Yoneno discloses a microwave oven having a

steam generator 40. The steam generator 40 is comprised of an adsorption unit 53 and a heating coil 54. The steam generated by the steam generator 40, as explained in column 16, lines 5–19, is sent to the heater 42 and then sent to the oven cavity 2 through the valve 45. In Yoneno, the steam is generated outside the oven cavity or heating chamber and then introduced to the inside of the oven cavity. Figures 5, 6, and 21 of Yoneno all show different embodiments to the one shown in Figure 14. The three embodiments, however, generate steam in the same manner as the one shown in Figure 14 in that they generate steam outside the oven cavity and then introduce the steam into the oven cavity as explained above. Thus, Yoneno does not teach guiding the steam from inside the heating to outside the heating chamber and back inside the heating chamber. Therefore, Yoneno does not teach all the limitations of claim 11.

Claims 8, 9, 12, 14 and 15 depend either directly or indirectly on claim 1, thus all arguments pertaining to claim 1 are equally applicable to these claims and are herein incorporated by reference.

Yoneno does not teach the limitations of claim 19 for which it is cited. More specifically, Yoneno does not teach “a feed water pipe connecting the feed water tank to the steam generating portion where the feed water pipe further comprises an intermediate portion; and, a heater to heat the water in the intermediate portion before the water enters the steam generating portion.” Referring to Figure 14 and to column 16, lines 5–18 of Yoneno, Yoneno discloses a steam generator 40 having an adsorption unit 53. The adsorption unit is composed of zeolite particles and iron powder mixed with each other. The zeolite particles adsorb water molecules. The iron powder is induction heated by a heating coil 54 and heats the water molecules with thermal energy so that the water molecules are released as steam. In Yoneno, steam is generated by converting water molecules absorbed from the air to steam and not by using an external water tank, as suggested by the Examiner. Thus, Yoneno cannot teach a feed water pipe having an

intermediate portion and a heater to heat the water in the intermediate portion before the water enters the steam generating portion. Therefore, the combined references do not teach all the limitations of claim 19.

The Examiner rejected claims 3, 4, 6, 7, 13 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Yoneno et al., U.S. Pat. No. 5,525,782 in view of Kurita et al., U.S. Pat. No. 6,232,587, as applied to claims 1, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14 and 15 above, and further in view of Kawada, JP 54-10460.

Claims 3, 4, 6, 7, 13 and 20 depend either directly or indirectly on claim 1, thus all arguments pertaining to claim 1 are equally applicable to these claims and are herein incorporated by reference.

The Examiner rejected claims 5, 10 and 16–18 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Yoneno et al., U.S. Pat. No. 5,525,782 in view of Kurita et al., U.S. Pat. No. 6,232,587, as applied to claims 1, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14 and 15 above, and further in view of Kurita, U.S. Pat. No. 6,232,587.

Claims 5, 10 and 16–18 depend either directly or indirectly on claim 1, thus all arguments pertaining to claim 1 are equally applicable to these claims and are herein incorporated by reference.

Enami does not teach all the limitations of claim 21. More specifically, Enami does not teach “wherein the steam generating portion is located only in the lower back portion of the heating chamber.” Referring to the figure in Enami, the figure shows a hot water tank (5) located at the bottom of the heating chamber (3). The hot water tank (5), however, in Enami is located across the entire bottom of the heating chamber (3), as depicted by the lines representing the hot water (5'). Thus, the hot water tank (5) Thus, Enami does not teach where the steam generating

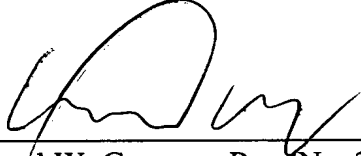
portion is located only in the lower back portion of the heating chamber. Therefore, the combined references do not teach all the limitations of claim 21.

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and notice to that effect is hereby requested. If it is determined that the application is not in a condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to initiate a telephone interview with the undersigned attorney to expedite prosecution of the present application.

If there are any additional fees resulting from this communication, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 16-0820, our Order No. 36549.

Respectfully submitted,

PEARNE & GORDON LLP

By: 
Michael W. Garvey – Reg. No. 35,878

1801 East 9th Street
Suite 1200
Cleveland, Ohio 44114-3108
(216) 579-1700

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